The Alberta Libraries Act

CHAPTER L-12.1 1983

LIBRARY POLICIES:

QUESTIONS TO ASK

Alberta
CULTURE
1985

LIBRARY POLICIES: QUESTIONS TO ASK

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LIBRARY POLICIES: QUESTIONS TO ASK

Introduction

This is the second of a series of "guidance documents" being produced by Alberta Culture, Library Services Branch to assist library boards and librarians in complying with the Libraries Act, 1983 and the Libraries Regulation, 1984. The documents are being compiled under the guidance, and with the advice, of a committee consisting of:

Doreen Armstrong, Chairperson, Leduc Municipal Library Board.
Pam Chislett, Councillor, Library Association of Alberta.
Sue Dutton, Alberta Library Board.
Joe Forsyth, Director, Alberta Culture Library Services Branch.
Howard Platt, President, Alberta Library Trustees Association.
Peter Taylor, Alberta Culture, Field Services Branch.

This publication contains suggestions for questions to ask when creating the policies which will guide your board in the future. It also provides an introduction to the creation of policies and describes the difference between policy and procedure.

The establishment of library boards is authorized by the Libraries Act, Statutes of Alberta, 1983, chapter L-12.1. Of the 245 library boards in the province, 215 are municipal boards established by a municipal by-law under section 9 of the Act; 27 are community library boards authorized by the Minister to provide library service in a designated area, and 3 are library system boards established by agreement between municipalities and/or school authorities.

All boards are charged with the "full management and control of the library". Municipal boards and library system boards are further charged to "organise, promote and maintain comprehensive and efficient library service".

Library boards have full responsibility for the development of policy for library service in their communities. For this reason, it is important for board members to know what a policy is and how it is developed.

2. POLICIES - WHAT THEY ARE

Policies are principles or guidelines which assist the library board to make day-to-day decisions and to achieve its mandate. They give definition to the philosophy of library service in the community and provide for the establishment of consistent operational procedures.

2.1 Mandate

The library board receives its mandate through the Libraries Act and, in most cases, a by-law enacted by municipal council. This mandate forms the foundation upon which local library service philosophy, policies and procedures are built.

2.2 Philosophy

A library board should have a philosophical statement expressing the board's "reason for being". A philosophical statement is the building material from which policies are constructed and, as such, deserves consideration at this point.

The library service philosophy may be written in its entirety as a part of the policy statement, or as a separate "mission statement". In either case, it should be a statement of beliefs held by the board. Through simple wording, it will identify the position of the board with respect to library services. Such issues may include the following:

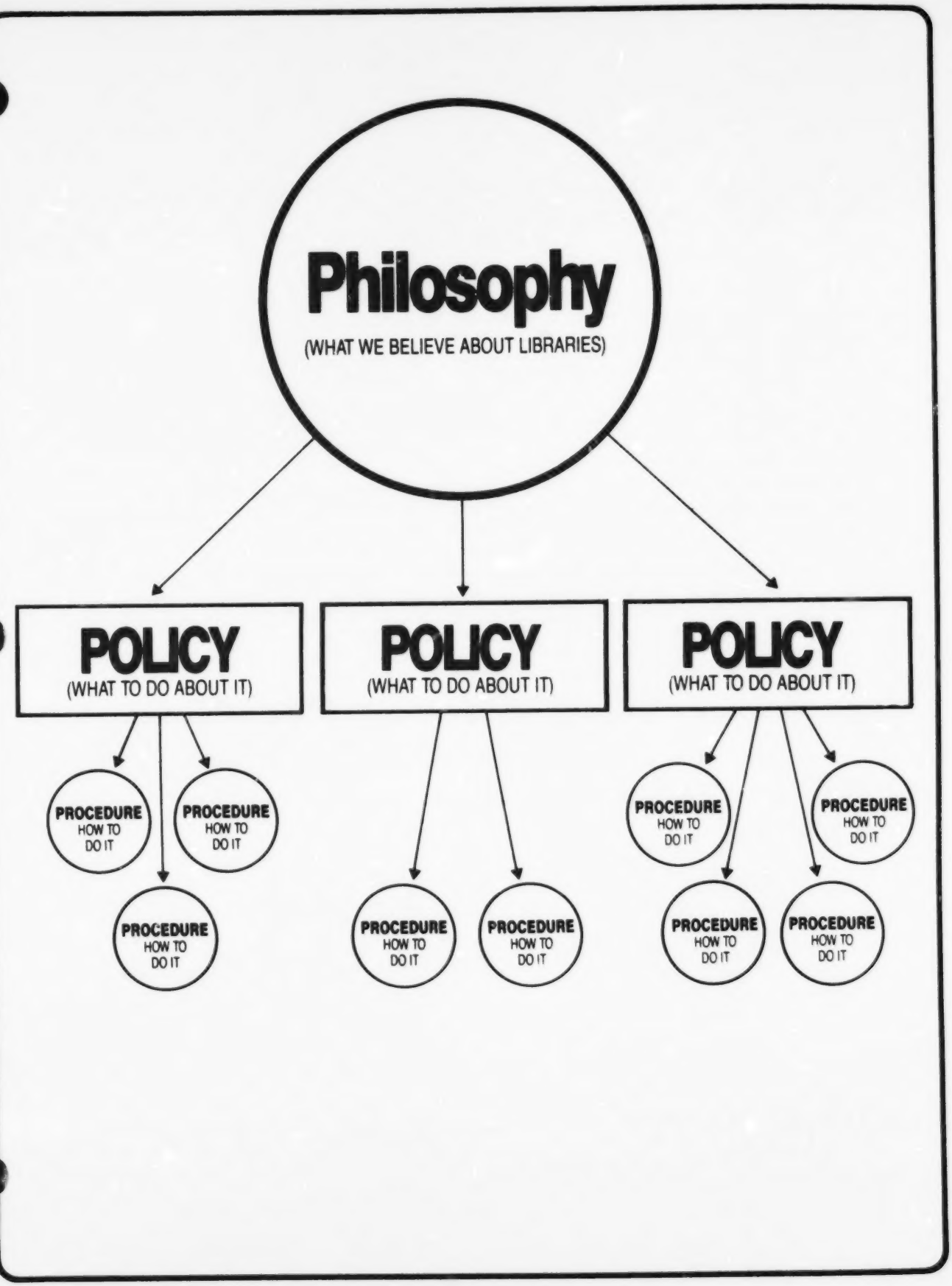
social value of library service,
cultural, educational and recreational values of library service,
personal vs public responsibility for financing,
type and quality of leadership to be provided,
commitment to planning and orderly development,
influences on the way library service is provided in the community.

2.3 Policies

Once the philosophical statement has been drafted, it must be translated into a program of activities and services. To do so, the board establishes a set of principles or guidelines upon which day-to-day operational decisions are based. These guidelines are called POLICIES. In general terms, the policy states what the board intends to do about its beliefs, as described in the philosophy. Each philosophical statement will be the reference for a number of policies. The provincial government, in the Libraries Regulation, sets out a number of specific areas in which policies are required. These are intended as minimum guidelines for boards in planning their service.

2.4 Procedures

As each philosophical statement generates several more specific policies, each policy becomes the reference for a number of statements of procedure. Procedures are very specific instructions which must be in harmony with eatablished policies.


Philosophy
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3. WHY DEVELOP POLICIES?

It was suggested earlier that a policy is an extension and, to a large degree, an expression of board philosophy. What the board believes about library service in the community is reflected through the policies that guide its actions.

Policies also help define the role of the board or board members in the delivery of library service. Board members who clearly understand board policies have little or no trouble finding satisfaction in serving in a meaningful way.

Policies provide consistency in the way the board operates. When based on a common policy, procedures will not lead the board in different directions.

Policies also serve the useful function of controlling activities so that they follow the course of development outlined in the board's plan of service.

A final benefit of policies is the measure of legal protection they provide when all else has been done to safeguard persons and property involved in the library program. These policies are given legal status by the passing of by-laws under section 40 of the Act.

4. WHEN TO DEVELOP POLICIES

Developing policies should be a planned process. It begins when the philosophy is clear and the board is prepared to act on its beliefs. Policies should be a result of board action, rather than reaction.

Emergent problems can be dealt with through emergency measures and need not dictate the timing of policy development.

It may take weeks, months or even years to get into a position where the policies are considered by the board to be adequate, but the lengthiness of the process is no cause for procrastination at the beginning. Depending on the size of the community, boards have varying periods of time in which to develop these policies. Most library boards will have until December 1987 to complete the process.

5. DEVELOPING POLICIES - THE PROCESS

Determining who does what in policy development will be influenced by the resources available to the board. Where professional staff are employed, they may assist the board by drafting the policy statement for board consideration. A board without professional staff will likely find itself, or a board sub-committee, wording the policy statement, but should seek to involve staff in its creation wherever possible.

A few cautions should be noted in developing policies:

Use examples from other boards to help, but don't copy verbatim,
Start with a fresh mind - don't look to old problems as a basis for new policy,
Begin by developing one policy at a time - small bites are easier to chew,
Expect your policies to be imperfect, to be criticized and to be amended - nobody is perfect,
Take your time and don't set unrealistic time expectations. Even when a comprehensive policy manual has been developed, review and revision are likely.

The following is a suggested policy development process:

1. Ensure that the philosophy of the board has been stated and is generally understood and accepted by board members. Even if you have no written philosophical statement, be clear as to what beliefs your policies will be reinforcing.

2. Decide which members of the board and staff will be responsible for seeing that the process continues at a progressive rate and in accordance with the philosophy of the board.

3. Select one statement from board philosophy, or one policy area from the list in the Libraries Regulation.

4. Write down as many policies related to the statement as possible. At this stage, do not take time for debate or refinement of the wording - just get them down on paper.

5. For each policy, list possible or actual situations to which that policy might apply.

6. Refer to the questions in this booklet which deal with that particular policy area. Then describe the desired effects to be achieved by implementing each policy.

7. Using the same questions, list the possible positive and negative reactions to the policies.

8. List the weaknesses or limitations of each policy.

9. In abbreviated form, list procedure statements that will likely result from each policy.

A standard form such as the one used in the example exercise on page 7 may be useful to the board when considering policy proposals.

After step 9, all the "ideas" should be down on paper. The task now is to organize the ideas and refine the wording of the policy statements.

10 Discuss the proposed policy and its wording so that there is no chance of it being misunderstood.

11 Review the policy with those who will be affected by it. If appropriate, involve the public, staff, and any interest groups at this stage, rather than after the policy has been adopted. Make changes as necessary.

12 Secure final approval from the board.

13 Notify concerned individuals and groups about the new policy.

14 Store the policy in a policy handbook, a copy of which should be held by all board members, and review it on a regular basis.

EXERCISE

Choose one policy statement and complete steps 1-9 described opposite.

1. Philosophical Statement
2. Proposed Policy Statement
3. Applicable Situations
4. Desired Effects
5. Possible Reactions
6. Weaknesses or Limitations
7. Procedure Statements

6. THE POLICY HANDBOOK

Members of the library board, staff, Alberta Culture, and possibly council should receive copies of policies as they are developed or revised. For easy reference, the policies can be kept in a policy handbook.

6.1 Binding

The simplest and most practical handbook is one which uses a standard three-ring binder to store the printed policy statements. Having only one statement per page facilitates expansion and updating of the handbook.

6.2 Categorising

If frequent reference to the handbook is expected, the policies must be easy to locate. Each policy should be assigned a reference or file number which can show categorization according to date or order of adoption, program, administrative function, or any other system of distinguishing policy groupings. Number/letter colour coding of policies are effective ways to make policies easier to find in the handbook.

6.3 Glossary

The policy handbook should include a glossary of terms commonly used. Those listed in the Libraries Act and Libraries Regulation would be a good starting place. These can be used to avoid wordy statements and to establish common definitions for terms subject to differing interpretation.

EXERCISE:

Define the following terms commonly used in policy statements:

local - _____

adult - _____

child - _____

resident - _____

support (as in "provide support to") - _____
_____

promote - _____

co-operate - _____

user - _____

shall, must, may (what's the difference?) - _____
_____

Compare your definitions with those of other members of the board and staff.

6.4 Format

Each page of the policy handbook should show the following:

Policy number or reference number,
Subject of policy,
Date of final approval,
Reference to policy being replaced, if applicable,
The policy statement,
Signature of board chairman indicating approval of the policy,
Approximate date for review of the policy.

It is suggested that a standard format for the handbook be used. The following sample gives one such format.

SAMPLE

River City Library Board POLICY

SUBJECT: Membership fees		**REFERENCE #:** 09-B-12
DATE APPROVED: 29 February 1985	**MOTION #:** 85-09	**REPLACES:** 07-B-21 and 07-B-22

Child

Membership fees for use of library materials shall reflect the Board's belief that children should pay only a token amount in order to establish a sense of value and appreciation for the materials being provided.

Adult

Adult charges shall be determined on the basis of the cost of issuing the card.

Youth

Youth charges shall be 2/5 or thereabouts of the adult membership fee, thus recognizing the growing accountability of youth.

Family

Family charges may be established on the basis of approximately 2/3 the regular charge assessed to a family of two adult parents and one youth and one child.

Approved

Board Chairperson

COMMENTS: Review once per year on or about March 15th.

6.5 Distribution

All board members should have their own copy of the policy handbook to use while they are serving on the board. Staff should also have access to a copy of the handbook, while the extent of public access to the document should be determined by the board. Updated material should be distributed to all holders of the policy handbook.

6.6 Evaluation

The policy development process never really ends. There may be a point at which the board feels there is a policy for everything, but that is also the time at which existing policies should be reviewed, evaluated and updated if necessary. Policy review is an ongoing activity that the board needs to establish as a regular function.

7. PROCEDURES

The greatest difficulty experienced by most boards and volunteer groups while developing policy is distinguishing between policy and procedure. It is an important distinction, worthy of consideration before embarking on the task of policy creation.

As mentioned, policies are based on board philosophy. In general terms, they state what guidelines the board will work within to maintain a consistent expression of its beliefs. Policies do not usually change drastically, unless board philosophy shifts radically.

Procedures should not be drawn up until policies are approved. They are based on the policies and state, in detail, what the board or staff must do and how it must be done in order to keep all actions consistent with policy. Procedures often change, since the same end can usally be accomplished through a variety of means. Procedures are specific to the situation and so change with the situation. The following illustration shows how a procedure develops out of and can change within the context of a policy.

Policy 3-A-16

The board believes that all citizens should be aware of library services available to them and, therefore, will actively maintain a programme of public information.

Procedure

The librarian shall submit a weekly information column to the River City Tribune for the purpose outlined in Policy 3-A-16.

Assume that the local newspaper, the River City Tribune, goes out of business. The policy stays the same because the board still believes in passing along information to the public. However, the procedure can change.

Procedure: The librarian will prepare a monthly newsletter from the board for the purposes outlined in policy 3-A-16. The newsletter is to be distributed with monthly council mailings, such as utility bills.

Carefully developed policies will give a definite direction to the board. Detailed procedures will keep the board moving in that defined direction. Procedures should be recorded in some kind of handbook and be clearly distinguished from policies. They should also be available to all who need them for reference and guidance.

POLICIES PERTAINING

TO

TRUSTEESHIP

TRUSTEE ORIENTATION AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

Introduction

Library trustees need to be informed. It is the responsibility of the library board to ensure that its trustee orientation program develops informed trustees who will understand their duties and responsiblities to the library and the community. New trustees will be more effective when they understand the role of the board and what role they, as members of that board, play in the functioning of a library. An orientation program may be staged over a period of weeks or months so as not to overwhelm new trustees at the beginning of their term.

ORIENTATION FOR TRUSTEES

Have veteran members of the board:
reflected on their own experiences as new members?
considered areas where they needed guidance when first joining the board?
shared these with the board?

Should the board have an orientation package? If so, the following might be considered for inclusion:

Legal Materials

- Libraries Act and Regulations.
- By-laws of the library.
- Department of Culture Act.
- System contract, where appropriate.

Financial Materials

- Cultural Grants Regulations.
- Library budget for operational year and forthcoming year (if available).
- Previous year audit.
- Capital expansion plans.

Library Background Information

- Goals and objectives of the library, including any statement of philosophy.
- Goals and objectives of the library system (if a member).
- History of the library.
- Library development plan.
- Most recent annual report.

- Organizational chart with names of staff and positions they occupy.
- Personnel job descriptions, classifications and salaries.
- Library statistics.
- Physical plan of the library.
- Library brochures or handouts.

Board Information

- List of board members including addresses and phone numbers. A profile of skills of trustees may also be included. (List of system board members if applicable).
- Description of responsibilities of the executive, committees and members of the library board.
- Past library board minutes.
- Calendar of scheduled board meetings and events including: board meetings, orientation, annual meetings, staff evaluation, open house, budget and presentations to municipality, planning sessions and committee appointments.
- Simple chart or summary of parliamentary procedure used by board.

Community Information

- Community profile.
- Statistical or survey information of community use of the library.
- List of names, addresses and phone numbers for local M.P., M.L.A., mayor or reeve, council, town administrator and other key people with whom the library board may frequently deal such as: recreation director, school superintendent, newspaper and radio contacts.

Provincial Information

- List of names and addresses of the Alberta Library Board.
- Alberta Library Board Annual Report.
- Alberta Public Libraries Statistics.
- Alberta Culture Library Services Branch brochures.
- Recent Alberta Library News.
- Recent Continuing Education Calendar.

Association Information

- Alberta Library Trustees Association Handbook.
- ALTA Manual.
- ALTA membership information and newsletter.
- Canadian Library Trustee Handbook.
- CLA membership information.
- Library Association of Alberta membership information.

Resources on Public Library Development

- Any information relating to proposed library system development in the area.
- Information on continuing education and conferences.

Orientation Program

Will the orientation program designed by the board:

1. provide the new trustee with the necessary information to perform his job well?
2. make the new trustee feel welcome by the board and staff?
3. make the new trustee feel useful as soon as possible?
4. be appropriate to the skills and background of the new trustee?
5. be available to the new trustee in advance of the first meeting?
6. concentrate initially on background information about your library?
7. be staged so as not to overwhelm new trustees with information?

Will the chairman of the board meet with the new trustee:

1. to explain the division of responsibility between the role of the board and that of the librarian?
2. to discuss staffing the library generally?
3. to discuss the board's involvement in public relations and programming?
4. to discuss local library issues?

Will the new trustee be taken on an official tour of the library:

1. to view the services provided by the library?
2. to meet the library staff?
3. to speak at some length with the librarian about concerns and issues?

Will the treasurer meet with the new trustee to review:

1. the library's financial position?

2. the provincial government grant structure?

3. the financial support from the municipality?

4. the long term financial perspective?

Would it be feasible to have the new trustee attend meetings of the various committees in order to better understand the mandate and work of the library board committees?

Upon completion of the orientation program will the new trustee:

1. be able to begin to participate fully in board activities?

2. be given an opportunity to supply the board with feedback on the orientation procedures?

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR LIBRARY TRUSTEES

INTRODUCTION

Orientation is only a first step. It is the primary responsibility of the trustee to work towards the betterment of the library and the community. To achieve this goal in an ever changing environment of needs and services, the trustee must stay informed of current trends and be consistently upgrading skills through a continuing education program. A continuing education program for library trustees should be both beneficial to the library and satisfying for the trustees.

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Can committees and members of your library board break down the responsibilities of the board into subject areas such as:

Legal
Financial/Budget
Personnel
Public Relations/Communication
Building
Research and Planning
Policy

SPECIFIC TRUSTEE SKILLS

What are the specific trustee skills which members would like to acquire?

e.g.

Meeting Skills
Public Speaking
Media Relations
Writing Skills
Working with Volunteers
Computer Literacy
Lobbying/Public Relations Skills
Financial Skills
Planning skills

EVALUATION

Once the information on skills and areas of responsibility is gathered, can it be logically ordered and evaluated such as on a continuing education chart?

Using this information, can the board determine:

1. if there is an adequate degree of expertise in the major areas of responsibility?

2. the specific areas of development that an individual board member may require to adequately fulfill his position?

3. that there is adequate sharing of responsibilities among board members?

4. those areas where the board should concentrate its efforts in order to achieve specific priorities?

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Does the board itself have resources to meet the continuing education needs of its members?

Are there better resources in the community that the board can draw upon? (e.g. the municipal administrator on procedures for drafting by-laws, the recreation director on meeting skills, Rural Education Development Agency courses for volunteer boards)

Is the library receiving and posting calendars which list programs sponsored by agencies in the community? (e.g. Further Education Council, Chamber of Commerce)

Is the library making its educational requirements known to coordinators of other programs?

OUTSIDE RESOURCES

If the library is a member of a library system, are there programs available to assist the board?

Do provincial departments, their representatives or consultants have programs that can assist in board development? (e.g. Alberta Culture Field Services; Recreation and Parks Field Services; Alberta Culture Library Services)

What programs, workshops, conferences are offered by library associations - the Alberta Library Trustee Association, the Library Association of Alberta and equivalent national organizations in both Canada and the United States - offer that can be of benefit to library trustees?

Is the board a member of relevant associations?

Do universities and community colleges in Alberta offer extension programs that may be of interest to the board?

Is there financial assistance for board members to assist them in participating in programs of continuing education?

HONORARIA AND EXPENSES FOR TRUSTEES WHILE ON BOARD BUSINESS

Introduction

Library boards have been traditionally thought of as volunteer boards, with no reimbursement to members for time or expenses. Through ministerial order in 1977, municipal and regional boards were allowed to pay honoraria and travelling expenses to members at current government rates. This ministerial order has now been rescinded and boards have autonomy to set their own rates for honoraria and expenses.

An honorarium is a fee paid to board members in recognition of services rendered, and has no relation to the cost or worth of those services. Sometimes an honorarium can be given instead of payment of expenses; in other cases both payments may occur.

Reasons often given for honoraria include: long distances travelled, babysitting/day care costs incurred because of board business, the need to pay for a replacement to do the work that the board member was unable to do because of board business. Trustees should not be expected to subsidize the library while on board business, nor should they be abusing their position by travelling "first class" or seeking to use honoraria as a prime source of income.

HONORARIA

Should there be a policy covering honoraria for trustees in general or should there be a policy concerning specific honoraria for specific occasions?

What are the policies for other boards in town, other library boards and members of council?

Should honoraria be considered only for board meetings or for committees, workshops and other business of the library board as well?

What policy should exist for attendance at conferences and workshops?

Will volunteers who gave time freely in the past be upset by the introduction of honoraria?

Can the library afford to pay honoraria?

On what basis should honoraria be paid: daily, hourly, per meeting?

EXPENSES

For what items should expenses be paid?

e.g. Accommodation
Meals
Gratuities
Travel

Should reimbursement be made on the basis of a flat rate per meal/day/event or based upon receipts of actual expense incurred?

Should an allowance be made for

1) private accommodation while on board business?
2) daily use of telephone for board business?
3) transportation costs?

If travel is required out-of-province, should there be a special rate?

If travel is made by private motor vehicle, should there be a travel allowance based on the number of kilometres travelled by trustees while on board business?

What provision should be made for conventions and workshop attendance?

What are the policies for other boards in town, other library boards and members of council?

What is the policy with regard to spouses accompanying board members to conventions and workshops?

POLICIES PERTAINING

TO LIBRARY MATERIALS

SELECTION, ACQUISITION, PURCHASE AND DISPOSITION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Introduction

A library collection provides resources to assist individuals in their pursuit of educational, intellectual, recreational and emotional enrichment in their lives. The library is responsible to its constituency and should review and evaluate the collection to meet community needs.

In developing a selection policy, consideration may be given to regional, national and/or local co-operative collection agreements that complement or affect the library's policy statements.

The board may wish to set priorities on specific user needs such as research, recreation, instruction, reference, general information, etc. Within these general priorities, statements on the forms of material collected may be expressed. These could include statements on print and non-print material, books in other languages and large print.

Collection development policy statements need to be reviewed at regular intervals. This will ensure that changes in user needs, priorities and budget are recognized.

SELECTION

How will the board determine what materials to select?

Will critical reviews be used, and will the decision to select be based on literary and/or artistic merit or popular demands?

How much weight will be placed on the need for popular material against the need for reference materials etc.?

What is the board's position on controversial materials, and will consideration be given to the Canadian Library Association's Statement on Intellectual Freedom?

Who will do the actual selection?

Does the board want to set quotas on various categories? For example, adult vs. juvenile, fiction vs. non-fiction, hardcover vs. paperbacks, lending vs. reference materials?

Is there a commitment to purchasing non-book materials such as records and tapes?

What is the commitment to Canadian materials?

GIFTS AND DONATIONS

Does the board wish to encourage receipt of gifts and donations from the public, and in what form?

Is the board registered with Revenue Canada as a charitable organization, or does it take advantage of the municipality's registration number for this purpose?

Will the board provide receipts for tax purposes?

Are there to be conditions surrounding the acceptance of gifts and donations.

Are there any situations under which the board may refuse to accept gifts and donations?

ACQUISITION AND PURCHASE

Does the board regularly review the disposition of funds?

Who has the authority to purchase?

Through what sources will the board acquire materials?

How often will purchasing be done?

Is there a commitment to purchase locally, in Alberta, and/or Canada?

Does the board take into consideration the discounts available?

Is consideration given to using wholesalers or other agencies which consolidate orders?

DISPOSITION

What are the criteria for discarding material, and how often is this done?

When a book has been discarded, what happens to it? (e.g. destroyed, sold, donated to another library, to the Canadian Book Exchange or to Alberta Culture's last copy fiction collection)

PROVISION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS NORMALLY LENT

INTRODUCTION

This policy should contain as few restrictions as possible in order to get material into the hands of the user at a time and in a place convenient for the user. The Libraries Act prohibits charges for borrowing materials normally lent. It is suggested that the policy be drafted to state exclusions from a general lending policy.

Some library materials that may require restrictions include: reference books, irreplaceable materials, materials in unusual format, materials that are only useful if all the parts are available or materials that are easily mutilated (e.g. newspapers).

This policy should be drafted in conjunction with the library by-law under section 40 of the Libraries Act.

CATEGORIES OF MATERIALS

Is the material intended primarily for consultation rather than for consecutive reading? (reference material.)

Is the material irreplaceable either through being out of print or of considerable value?

Is the material presented in a format which requires special equipment (e.g. microfiche)? In other words, does the material exist in such a form as to be useless outside the library?

Is the material only useful if all parts are available? (e.g. periodicals.)

Is the material subject to easy mutilation or destruction? (e.g. newspapers.)

CONDITIONS OF LOAN

Under what circumstances might any of the material not normally lent be allowed to be borrowed?

What are the loan periods for the various types of material in the library?

What are the penalties for abuse of borrowing privileges? (This must be contained in the library's by-law and may be omitted from the policy document if preferred.)

ACQUISITION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS AND INFORMATION FROM OTHER SOURCES

INTRODUCTION

With more books published than ever before, no library can hope to be self-sufficient. The logical approach to satisfying requests that a library cannot supply from its own collection is to borrow from another library or community resource. Access to information is one type of service that a public library can provide, and all sectors of the community at some time demand information on the widest variety of subjects. The library can be a clearing house, capable of directing enquiries to other sources as well as being a source in its own right. The Libraries Act prohibits charges for acquiring material or information where the board considers this acquisition to be the most efficient way of providing such information or material.

This policy should be drafted in conjunction with the by-law under section 40 of the Libraries Act, and a reference to limitations should be contained in that by-law.

INTERLIBRARY LOAN

What is your purpose in participating in interlibrary loan? Is it an extension of, or a substitute for, resources not in the library?

Will you be willing to lend material if it is requested from your collection?

How does the board determine when an interlibrary loan is the most efficient way of providing material and what role does the patron have in this decision?

Are limits to be set with respect to the number of requests that may be made, or the type(s) of material which will be borrowed?

What is the board's position with regard to borrowing material from libraries which levy a charge for interlibrary loans?

Are limits to be set with regard to the type(s) of patrons who will be accorded this service? (e.g. corporations, university students, K-12 students?)

INFORMATION SERVICES

What is the service philosophy of the board? Does it cover general information requests, including telephone questions, and what priority will be given to information services?

Will the responsibility for information services be assigned to a specific staff member(s) and what provision will be made for training in reference techniques?
To what extent will the board provide for instruction of patrons in the use of library materials?

Does the policy include a statement about local resources and agencies as part of the information service provided by the library?

Is the board willing to provide computer database searches for patrons, either in-house or by arrangement with another library which has this facility?

How does the board determine when computer database searches are the most efficient means of providing information for the patron, and what role does the patron have in determining this?

If computer searches are provided, what limits might be placed on the service to prevent abuse of it?

RESOURCE SHARING

INTRODUCTION

Resource sharing means making available to other libraries the library materials owned by a board, the information contained in those materials, and the staff expertise required to locate and make available the information or the library materials.

Alberta Culture, Library Services Branch, co-ordinates a two-faceted resource-sharing network amongst public libraries. The first facet is the provision of a zenith telephone number through which information questions can be referred to resource libraries in the Province. The second is the provision of an interlibrary loan service linking all public libraries to the resource libraries in the Province, university libraries and out-of-province sources of materials.

ZENITH SERVICE

What is the board's position on the use of the zenith reference and referral service?

If so, what publicity is given to the availability of the service?

Are the staff aware of the policies and procedures for the service?

What training might be required in order to make the zenith service as effective and efficient as possible?

INTERLIBRARY LOAN SERVICE

What is the board's position on participating in the interlibrary loan service?

Is this seen as a substitute for, or an extension to, its own resources?

Is the board willing to loan material if it is requested from the library?

Are the staff familiar with the policies and procedures for the service?

What training might be required to make the service as effective and efficient as possible?

What publicity is given to the service?

RESOURCE LIBRARIES

Is your library one of the designated resource libraries in the Province?

If so, is the board familiar with the responsibilities which this designation carries and the policy under which financial assistance is made available from Alberta Culture?

If so, to what extent is the board willing to commit its own financial and staff resources to sharing its resources with other libraries in the community, in Alberta and/or outside the province?

PROVISION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH

INTRODUCTION

The Government of Canada has a stated policy on the importance of multiculturalism, and the Government of Alberta recognises the diversity of ethno-cultural groups in the province. These policies encourage all citizens to retain their literary and cultural legacies. People are interested in reading in other languages for information, for pleasure and for such practical reasons as conducting business or travelling in a foreign country. Information is often only available in the original language in which it was written, so providing materials in languages other than English can be important for this reason as well as for the traditional provision for those unable to read in English.

Alberta Culture, Library Services Branch, co-ordinates the provision of materials from the National Library of Canada's Multilingual Biblioservice and supplements these materials with books in French and other languages. At present, collections are available in thirty languages.

Any restrictions on availability of these materials should be considered in conjunction with the by-law required under section 40 of the Libraries Act.

ETHNO-CULTURAL GROUPS

What is the ethnic composition of your community?

Is this composition steady or transient?

What are the reading needs of your patrons for other languages?

Are there people of differing ethno-cultural backgrounds in senior citizens homes and drop in centres?

How does the library staff inform the community about the availability of materials in languages other than English?

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Are there language courses other than English taught in schools?

Do school libraries provide only curriculum materials in these other languages or are supplementary reading materials provided as well?

SOURCES OF MATERIAL

Is the library staff aware of the services provided by Alberta Culture Library Services Branch?

To what extent can or should the board provide materials in languages other than English for its community?

What other sources of material are available in your community? (e.g. church or ethno-cultural organization libraries). Are these collections open to the public? Is there a possibility of providing service through these organizations to ethno-cultural groups?

PROVISION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS TO PERSONS UNABLE TO USE CONVENTIONAL PRINT MATERIALS

INTRODUCTION

Persons unable to read or handle conventional print materials in a normal manner are entitled to access to library and information services.

Alberta Culture, Library Services Branch, purchases "talking books" and makes them available to eligible patrons through public libraries. These are full length books on cassettes. The branch also assists libraries by providing temporary loan of playback machines especially designed for print-handicapped persons and has demonstration collections of large print books.

EXTENT OF NEED FOR SERVICE

What community and social service organizations deal with handicapped persons in the community? What contact does the library have with these agencies?

What needs exist in the community for large print or talking books?

Is there any need for outreach or shut-in services to institutions, hospitals or individual residences?

What promotion of special services for print-handicapped persons takes place in the community?

Is the library accessible to handicapped persons? Is any special help available to such persons from library staff?

ALBERTA LIBRARY SERVICES TO THE HANDICAPPED

Are the board and staff aware of the eligibility requirements for Alberta Culture's services?

Who is eligible in the community?

What is the board's role in providing large print books and talking books from its own resources?

POLICIES PERTAINING

TO LIBRARY FACILITIES

PARTS OF THE BUILDING, MANAGED BY THE BOARD, NOT NORMALLY USED FOR LIBRARY PURPOSES

INTRODUCTION

The board should ensure that any group using the facilities not normally used for library purposes, and within the board's control, will meet certain standards of use set by the board. The Libraries Act prohibits charges for use of those parts of the building used for library purposes. Therefore, it is important to carefully define the areas of the library building not so used if any charges are to be levied.

This policy should be drafted in conjunction with the by-law under section 40 of the Libraries Act, and any fees must be outlined in that by-law.

DEFINITION

Which parts of the building, if any, are not used for library purposes?

ACCESSIBILITY AND SECURITY

How accessible are these areas? Does one need to go through the library itself or is there a separate entrance way?

Are there washrooms separate from the regular library areas?

While these other facilities are being used, are library materials and equipment secure from theft or damage?

Who will open and close the facility?

Does use of the library building for other than normal library activities have an effect on the insurance coverage of the building and is this insurance adequate?

CONDITIONS OF USE

Who is allowed to use these facilities?
(e.g.Library staff for library programs, non profit groups, profit groups?)

Should fees be charged? How much?

Should fee rates be prorated? (Different rates for different groups?)

Should there be a damage deposit for use of the facility?

Who pays for janitorial services for the room after its use?

Should the users of the facility be held responsible for returning the room to its original condition?

HOURS OF SERVICE AT LIBRARY SERVICE POINTS

INTRODUCTION

It is important that public libraries encourage all residents of the community to use the library services and materials that are provided. This objective may be negated if the library facilities are not open at times useful to potential patrons.

Terms and conditions under which the public are admitted to the library will be contained in the by-law required under section 40 of the Libraries Act. This policy will outline the actual hours of opening of the facility.

FACTORS AFFECTING USE

Are there specific times when rural people come into town to do business and may wish to use the library?

Are there particular times when school children, including those bused into town, may use library services?

Are there late night shopping stores in the area of the library which may attract library users?

If the library is built as a joint facility with other groups (school, town office, community groups), are there participants in these other groups' programs who might want to make use of library services?

VARIETY OF HOURS

Is the library open during different parts of the day throughout the week? (e.g. evening hours on one or more days; morning and/or afternoon hours on other days.).

Is there a demand for library services on Sunday?

Does demand for library service vary during summer?

Are opening hours easy for the community to remember?

POLICIES PERTAINING

TO STAFF, USERS AND THE COMMUNITY

PERSONNEL POLICY
INCLUDING ORIENTATION AND CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR STAFF

INTRODUCTION

People are the library's most valuable resource and usually account for the largest portion of the budget. Clearly defined personnel policies and procedures should be established to help in the hiring and retention of the best possible staff, and help establish good staff morale. They will help to provide clear communication channels within the library, and between the staff and the board. Many of these policies are equally applicable to volunteers, and consideration should be given to the board's policy with regard to volunteers.

When a board is developing a personnel policy, the following items should be considered.

HIRING STAFF

- Is the board aware of the legislation governing the employment of staff?
- Are there clearly defined procedures for the recruitment, selection and appointment of the chief librarian and other staff?
- Is there an orientation program for new staff?
- Does the board have a policy on hiring of relatives?

COMPENSATION AND POSITION CLASSIFICATION

- Are the duties and responsibilities of each staff position clearly defined and accompanied by an organizational chart?
- Are there written up to date job descriptions for every position?
- Is the reporting structure within the staff and between the staff and board clearly defined and understood by all?
- Have all positions been classified so as to define qualifications and differentials between duties and levels of responsibility, and has a salary schedule for each type of position been approved by the board?
- Is the salary schedule and classification system regularly reviewed by the board and library management?
- Is there a system of pay or compensation based on merit, experience and/or length of service?
- Has the board considered the relationship between library classifications and those of the municipality?

PERSONNEL PROCEDURES

- Is there a probationary period with a formal review procedure for new staff members?

- Is there a regularly scheduled, formal performance review procedure for all staff?

- Has a procedure for promotions, demotions, suspensions, dismissals, and discipline been established?

- Is there a grievance procedure through which employees may be assured of a fair and impartial hearing and speedy resolution?

- Are all personnel records maintained as confidential documents and are employees notified of changes to their file?

BENEFITS

- What employee benefits are provided? (e.g. life insurance, retirement/pension plan, workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, health care coverage, dental plan, educational support.)

- Are employee benefits similar to those of other public institutions in the area?

- How do they compare with those offered in private industry?

HOLIDAYS, VACATION AND LEAVE

- Is there a policy on vacation leave?

- Is there a policy and compensation for short term sick leave, long term general illness and long-term disability?

- Are staff members allowed leave with or without pay in the event of serious family illness, death and serious legal matters?

- What compensation is there for employees and the library in the event of jury duty?

- Are library staff encouraged to attend library related workshops, institutes, meetings and conventions with time off and/or with pay and travel expenses?

- Are staff allowed/encouraged to attend board meetings with or without compensatory time-off where feasible?

- Is there provision for arranging leaves with or without pay for such things as personal business, paternity, maternity and adoption, or educational study?

- Does the library have a system of time-off and scheduling for civic and religious holidays?

HOURS AND SCHEDULES

- Is the work week for full-time staff members within the range of 35-40 hours/week?

- Is a five day work week scheduled as much as possible?

- Are there rest and lunch breaks in accordance with legislation?

- When overtime is required, is there adequate compensation?

- Is there a staff back-up system to cover for planned and unexpected absences?

- Are sufficient off-desk hours allocated to staff?

- Does the library work schedule reflect patron use patterns?

ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL POLICIES

Other matters on which the board might have policies include:

- health and safety in the workplace, including emergency procedures,
- staff smoking in the building,
- dress code,
- staff parking,
- allowable political activity,
- personal book orders,
- function of staff association,
- staff use of telephone for personal calls,
- tardiness,
- regular staff meetings,
- use and recognition of volunteers.

ORIENTATION

New staff members, irrespective of experience, will require an introduction to the specific operations of the library and to the services available to public libraries in Alberta. Once established in the job, staff may wish to learn more about ongoing developments in library service in order to provide effective support to the board.

Basic Orientation

- Is basic information provided about the position? (e.g. job description, personnel policy, organization chart, procedure manual.)
- Is background information provided about the library? (See list on page 13.)
- Is there an information package available similar to that available for trustees?
- Is there a readily available staff manual?
- Is information provided about provincial services, including manuals for direct services provided by Alberta Culture?
- Is information provided about membership in the Library Association of Alberta and the Canadian Library Association?
- Are staff encouraged to attend the annual new librarian's orientation workshop provided by Alberta Culture?

Orientation Program

Will the orientation program:

1. provide the new librarian or library worker with a clear outline of the kind and level of activity that is expected?
2. provide sources of information so that the staff member can obtain further information?
3. be structured to gradually acquaint the new staff member with the most important aspects of the job first, and other aspects over time?
4. outline the role and responsibilities of the staff in relation to the board, other staff and the public?
5. make the new employee feel welcome?

In the case of a new chief librarian, will the program introduce the librarian to major issues facing the library, and any proposed strategies for dealing with them? Will support be provided from the board to help the librarian make the transition to this position?

On completion of the orientation, will the new employee

1 understand the scope of the job and be prepared to take on its challenge?

2 know what support systems exist, both within the library and in the province, and how to contact the individuals involved when questions arise?

3 be willing to provide feedback on the orientation program?

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- Is there a program of on-going, in-service training in addition to the new staff orientation?

- Does continuing education activity meet specific needs related to regular duties carried out by the staff member?

- Does continuing education activity meet specific needs identified during the performance appraisal process?

- Does continuing education activity encourage personal and/or job-related growth?

- Are staff encouraged to join and actively participate in professional/work-related organizations? Is time-off allowed to conduct association-related work?

- Are staff encouraged to take library science and/or job related courses? Is there any time or financial compensation?

- May staff take educational leave with or without compensation?

- Are staff members encouraged to contribute suggestions towards improving the library's services?

CONFIDENTIALITY OF USER RECORDS

INTRODUCTION

For the protection of the privacy of library patrons and the library itself, it is necessary to have a policy outlining who has the right of access to library records, including those which link specific library materials, enquiries or activities, with specific patrons.

PATRON RECORDS

What records does the library keep concerning its patrons?

How will these records and the information contained in them be treated?

Who will have access to patron files? (personal information about patrons such as address, etc.)

CIRCULATION RECORDS

When any record of a transaction exists, who shall have access to that record?

Do parents have the right to view library records to determine what library materials their children are using?

LIBRARY USE

Are any records kept of the number and character of questions asked by patrons?

Are any records kept of the frequency or content of visits to the library by patrons?

Is the staff aware, informally or formally, of the above information, or of the type and character of materials borrowed by patrons?

What rules exist to restrict the availability of this information? Are staff discouraged from discussing reading habits of patrons?

LEGAL ACCESS TO RECORDS

Under what conditions will any of these records be divulged or released?

Should these records be available to agents of the local, provincial or federal governments, including law enforcement officials, with or without a subpoena, process or order pursuant to law?

To what extent should the board require that the "order" be in proper form and be showing good cause before complying with the order?

Should any other individual, corporation or organization other than those named above be accorded access to records?

COMMUNITY RELATIONS
INCLUDING PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Public relations is the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain an understanding between an organisation and its public or community. The public image of an organization is important in obtaining financial and/or moral support as well as in gaining and maintaining the co-operation of its workers. A good community relations program can help the board achieve its goals more easily.

Public relations starts with the people who staff and operate the library. A courteous and friendly library atmosphere is an important priority of any successful public relations effort.

Publicity, or exposure, is the core of public relations programming. It tells the library's story through the established channels of communication, including the media. Publicity makes the public aware of the existence and work of your organization.

PUBLICITY

What are the board's aims, problems, audience and available resources?

Does the library need a communication plan including an outline of publicity opportunities?

Does the board wish to publicize work achieved as well as upcoming events?

What are the best methods in the local area to publicize library events?

Are board members involved in publicizing the library?

Is regular contact maintained with the media in the community? If so, by whom - board and/or staff?

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Who is responsible for public relations planning ?

What emphasis does the board feel should be given to a public relations program?

Does the board feel that a public relations program should be directed at telling others how the library is meeting community needs?

Does the municipality or governing authority set aside funds which can be used by the board for public relations?

Does the board invite the public to its meetings?

Are there rules for staff courtesy?

CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCIES

INTRODUCTION

By co-ordinating its services and programs with other agencies, a board can stretch its resources. Through co-operation, the library can help meet the needs of the community more readily and effectively. By having a specific policy, trustees are provided with a basic plan on how to carry out their objective of co-operation, and are reminded of the interdependence of community resources.

COMMUNITY CO-OPERATION

Has the library established contacts with other organizations or agencies in town?

e.g. Cultural and/or Recreation Board
Health Unit
Service Clubs
Schools and continuing education organisations
Government Agencies
Social Clubs
Other associations

Is the board aware of the objectives of other community agencies? Has it shared its own objectives with these agencies?

How are the objectives of the other agencies related to those of the Board?

Can the library try to co-ordinate its services or programs with other groups in town so as to avoid duplication?

Does the library wish to work with other organizations to develop combined programs for citizens?

Does the library wish to offer its services and resources to the advantage of other groups? (e.g. free use of meeting room).

Is the board aware of other resources such as those contained in Alberta Culture's booklet "Guide to Programs and Services"?

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